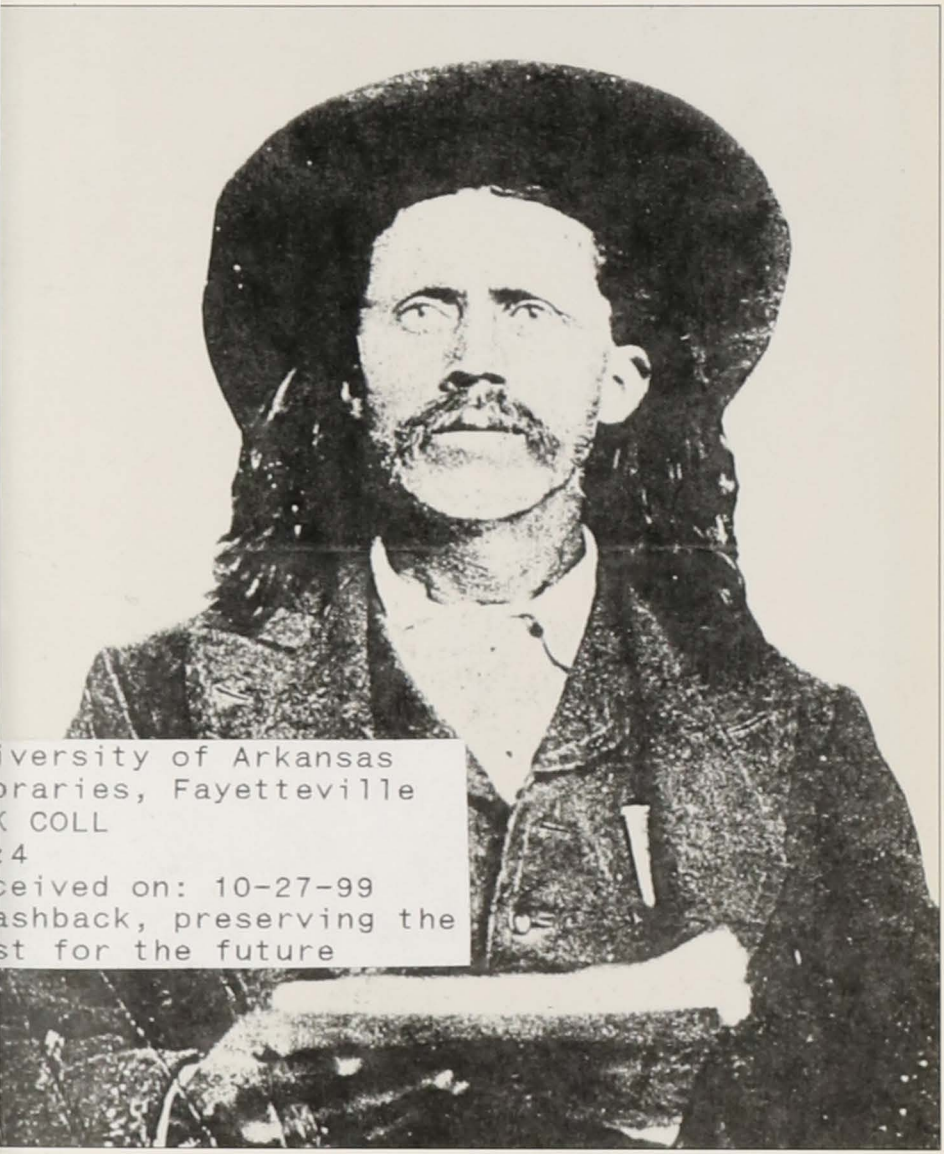
FLASHBACK

reserving the Past for the Future

Volume 49 **November 1999** **Number 4**



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WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Washington County Historical Society

118 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701

Flashback is published quarterly in February, May, August and November. Send all material for publication to the editor at 118 East Dickson Street, Fayette-ville, AR 72701. There is no payment for articles published in *Flashback*. The Editor retains the right to edit all submitted articles prior to publication.

Membership is invited of those interested in the preservation of Washington County's history. Dues are $15 annually. Donations, tax deductible according to current law, are gratefully received any time for special projects. Members are mailed *Flashback* every quarter. Past issues cost $5 each, current year's issues, $4 each.

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Cover photo: "TEXAS JACK," notorious outlaw whose real name was Nathaniel Reed, later sold a booklet about his life and lectured on the evils of sin and his reformed life. (See story on pages 21-45.)

FLASHBACK

Preserving the Past for the Future

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FLASHBACK is published and mailed four times a year—the first week in February, May, August, and November. Articles for *Flashback* should be submitted 60 days before the publishing date of each issue. Acceptable articles will be published in the next available issue, provided there is space.

COPY to be printed in *Flashback* may be submitted in one of several ways: 1) furnished on computer disc, preferrably in WordPerfect or Microsoft Word for either Macintosh or a PC, 2) by e-mail to the editor at <dschaefe@comp.uark.edu> or, 3) cleanly typed copy that can be optically scanned. Text copy, photos, and artwork are all assembled on a computer. We welcome letters or e-mail messages that tell us of planned articles or inquire about Society activities.

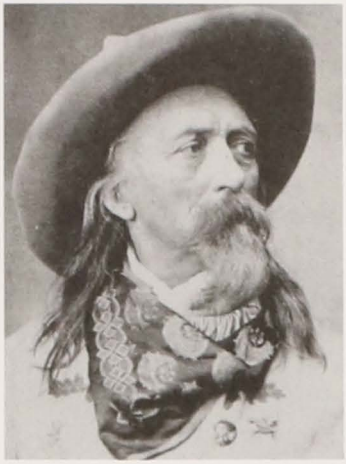
BOY SCOUTS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY:

An Early And Incomplete Chronology

by Herman S. Napier

Veterans of the Spanish-American War had years before come home, and prospects of another conflict were still some time in the future. It was 1910; Fayetteville was a growinq city, near 4500 people. It was also a year the Boy Scouts of America was organized. By 1916 their charter would be approved by Congress, and interest had started to build, even in Washington County. Some claim that things were already underway here, from the very beginning.

Local reports say the first troop was formed in Fayetteville by an "Old Scout" of the Western Frontier. He was Captain Carlos Ludwig von Berg, one of the colorful individuals here at the turn of the century. Charles von Berg was the type you would expect to be storied, and was a consummate storyteller himself. He was over 70 years old when he moved to Washington County, but one thing he did not seem ready to do was retire. He usually appeared in the dress of a frontier scout and natives tell that he played "taps" every evening at his "Lodge" on Mount Sequoyah. He is men-



Capt. Carlos L. von Berg is credited with starting Scouting in Washington County. ***Photo from Washington County Historical Society files, Shiloh Museum of the Ozarks.***

tioned as starting the first Boy Scout troop in Fayetteville (and maybe in Arkansas) in 1911, and serving as Scoutmaster until 1914.

A group of Boy Scouts marched in his funeral in 1918. Local boys mentioned as being in the von Berg troop were: Harvey W. Phillips, Joe Collins, Horace Harding, Joel Fallin, Roy Keen, Jerome Thompson, Allen Erwin, J. Wythe Walker Jr., Byrnes Walker, Gaston Skaggs, Lamar Hall, John Skillern, Charles Crockett, Frank Murtha, Billy Nettleship, Bobby McFarland, Ernest Erwin, George Wolf, and Dick Gilbreth. The troop appears to have been active until 1925. (*Northwest Arkansas Times*, 11 Feb 1946)

No doubt there were many others interested in Scouting during this time but, for these early days, accurate records are difficult to find. The boys and their leaders were likely to be much more interested in Scouting's outdoor activities than in writing history for readers. The largest town in the county was Fayetteville, but others were not far behind, and before the end of World War I at least one other unit was already active in the area. At Springdale's M.E. Church, South, the boys must have been typical when they assembled for a meeting on 10 June 1918, and their formal entry into the Boy Scout organization. Parents were requested to be present, friends were invited, appropriate talks were qiven, and the Scout Oath was administered by the Scoutmaster, A.H. Dulaney. Unfortunately, the names of individual members of the troop were not reported. (*Springdale News*, 14 Jun 18)

Whether few or many boys were in the program, they must have been doing the right things. Before Scouting was 10 years old, local troop activities were already being publicly recognized. One commentary in the local paper raised questions such as: "Who helped in the local Red Cross campaign? Who helped in the Liberty Loan?

Who stood by the YMCA? Who helped to distribute hand bills for any good cause? The answer was the Boy Scouts, in their efforts to be useful to their town and country." (*Springdale News*, 7 Mar 19)

In the history of Scouting it is quite common for a troop to be organized and conduct a program for a number of years, then, as the original members of the troop grow beyond Scouting age and adult leaders are called to other activities, the troop charter could lapse. At that time, the unit is dropped from the Scout rolls until a new one is formed. The result is that some years show a wealth of Scouting activity while in others it is intermittent or not reported. This does not mean that all the action has stopped; during these "quiet" periods there may be a number of excellent programs in progress that are not in the public eye. This is true throughout the United States, so the south and the mid-west are certainly no exceptions.

By the early 1920s Scouting was firmly established in Washington County. One of the most respected and durable units has been Fayetteville's Troop 102, which received its charter in 1923 (some local reports say the group was started as Troop 5, in 1922). The first scoutmaster of mention was Roy Elliot who must have set a good precedent. The troop was to continue many years to the future. After Scoutmaster Elliot came more strong volunteers such as Wayne Henbest, Dr. Dwight Moore, Bunn Bell, Robert Rowden, and others. On the troop committee was C. C. Yarrington who served as its chairman for 25 years. Other early committee members, such as M. L. Price and C. D. Atkinson, were active for at least 20 years. Over the years the troop had an impressive list

of members and, as with other similar programs, many of these grew up to become men who made significant contributions to their city and state. Those listed on the 1929 roster, for example, were: Paul Adams, Buster Barron, Wade Barron, William Bridenthall, Clinton Bates, Raymond Bell, Harry Bell, Homer Brown, Levi Conklyn, Oscar Gatlin, Orace Graham, Billy Hall, Orin Henbest, Guy Hendrix, Charles Holland, Martin Johnson, Mazie Mayes, Montell Molloy, James Payne, Ernest Pumlee, Fred Raedels, Norman Reed, James Reed, Eddie Ross, Lovell Smith, Clyde Selley, Vernon Vaughn, Jack Von Berg, Clifton Wade, Harvey Walknitz, Paul Walden, Joe Womack, Charles Bates, Burton Fields, Charles Hansard, Harry Hurst, Ruel Baker, Ernest Palmer, Lawrence Stubblefield, Raymond Pearson, Jack Pearson, Jack Murphy, Charles Cory, L.C. Smith, and Harvey Cunningham. (*Northwest Arkansas Times*, 4 Feb 49)

For 1925, the local paper reported there were five troops active in Fayetteville. At the annual Father and Sons banquet of that year scout attendees included:

Troop 1: Henry Paisley, Jim Falls, John McConnell, Arthur McClelland, Lawrence Haigh, Louis Mitchell, Lloyd Clark, Richard H. Williams, Allen Dowell, Arthur H. Hale, Harrison Hale Jr., Dan Jamison 2nd, and Scoutmaster Wymond French.

Troop 3: Wilson Mock, Wendell Polk, Courtney Walker, Dick Mock, Glen Hendrick, and Guy Bartley.

Troop 4: Eugene Robinson, Charles Hall, Frank Gray, Diemer Parks, Frank William Davis, Willis Wright, Thomas Waugh, Gilbert Cady, Jr., Hayden Watson, Phillip Mock, Marden May, and Anderson Nettleship.

Troop 5: Clifton Wade, Martin Johnson, Charles Bates, Edward Maddox, William Bridenthal, Paul Adams, Reull Baker, Clifton Bates, Raymond Bell, Charles Atkinson, James Read, Chas. Coty, Billy Fall, Wade Banor,

Orrin Henbest, Robert Bates, Harry Hurst, Jack Von Berg, James Payne, Burton Fields, Scoutmaster W.I. Mayfield, and Assistant Wayne A. Henbest.

Troop 6: Dwight Hawk and Kenton Garrison. (*Fayetteville Democrat*, 14 Feb 25)

In 1930, Springdale Scoutmaster Clyde Rankin had more than 20 members in Troop 106, and was especially honored to have two scouts of very high rank. One was Emanuel Miller, a Gold Bronze Scout, and Rex Connor an Eagle Scout. The troop celebrated National Boy Scout Week that year with a display that included coin collections, Indian arrow heads, an archery target, a knot board, and other craft items. There were also two radios built to receive broadcasts from distant stations. Some adult leaders who had been active in scouting activities in Springdale were lawyer Guy Howard and Rev. Ira A. Brumley, former pastor of the Methodist Church. (*Fayetteville Democrat* 14 Feb 30)

These Scouts in front of the Fayetteville Administration Building, about 1937-39, were probably elected city officials. Second from left in dark trousers is Jack Hall. Who are the others? ***Photo from Washington County Historical Society files, Shiloh Museum of the Ozarks.***

During the same year (1930), mention was made of a meeting of Fayetteville Troop 24 guided by Scoutmaster Emil Sonneman where 31 Scouts were present, along with Assistant Scoutmaster Hempel and Junior Assistant West. Lon Dickson was elected Assistant Patrol Leader and Pleas Mullenix to Scout Scribe.

At the Fayetteville Troop 5 meeting, Scoutmaster Bunn Bell announced that the troop was full (35 boys) and urged others who wanted to become Scouts to join other local troops. (*Fayetteville Democrat*, 22 Feb 30)

In February 1935, the Scouting proqram in Springdale was being honored by elections that allowed Boy Scouts to hold city office for one day (8 Feb). Any person age 12 to 100 could vote for a candidate from one of the two parties.

Whigs		Tigers
Jack Smitherman	MAYOR	Willard Dickson
John A. Fraser	CHIEF POLICE	Charles Hallock
John F. Bule	FIRE CHIEF	Mayo Wilson
Bob Smitherman	CITY CLERK	Elmer Williams
John Mayfield	CITY ATTY	Kermit Eggenspeiger

It appears the Whigs were more successful in the election, but the losers were appointed as assistants so everyone was able to participate. Similar city elections were held in 1936 and 1937. Winning candidates in 1936 were:

MAYOR	John A. Fraser
CHIEF POLICE	John Bule
FIRE CHIEF	Warren Rankin
CITY CLERK	Kermit Eggenspeiger
CITY ATTY	Bob Smitherman

Boys in the elections conducted in 1937 were guided by Scoutmaster H.C. Dierich, who came to be one of the

most respected Scout leaders in the area. Election winners that year were:

MAYOR	Kermit Eggenspeiger (AM)
	Bob Smitherman (PM)
CH POLICE	Billy Paul Backus
FIRE CHIEF	Ruben Bryant
CITY CLERK	Gail Brown
CITY ATTY	Bennet Brogdon
HEALTH OFF	Leroy Williams
COURT OFF	Mayo Wilson

POLICE OFFICERS: Burke Davis, Robert Falgalter, Bryon and Franklin Nicholson, Willard Dickson and Harold Griggs. (These new officials were able to raise $61.50 in fines, to be used for summer camp and to equip the Boy Scout headquarters.)

Plans for the 1939 Boy Scout week was led by Troop 106 under the supervision of Scoutmaster Dierich. The Troop Committee included Chairman D.D. Deaver, committee members Tommy Glass, Clark Walker, Kermit Eggenspeiger, R.N. Shaw, W.J.B. Work, J.A. Trice, Glenn M. Riggs, Harold E. Henson and Lowrey Walker. (Notes from *Springdale News*, 1935-1939) (Wash. Co. Historical Society - "Boy Scout Files" 1999)

Scouting continued to grow during the 1930's and 1940's, with their efforts resulting in multiple units and an increasing number of young people. Of the units active at that time, Troop 101 of Fayetteville (led by Dwight Isely from 1935 and Frank Hancock from 1940) was probably typical. Also appropriate is an incident involving the troop during the Second World War. For their efforts, they received special recognition (and presentation of a real practice bomb) from the Army Air Force for collecting a record number of old clocks. These were needed and used to build special training aids that saved many critical hours in the bombardier training programs. (Wash. Co. Historical Society - Boy

An Eagle Scout ceremony in Springdale June 23, 1978. Left to right, Rev. Joseph Taylor (1st Methodist Church), Larry Thompson, David Zuborg, Clark Baird, Derik Reed, _____ _____, and Robert Ziegler; back row: Drew Jackson and John LeFevre. Awards were presented by Arkansas Attorney General Bill Clinton. ***Photo courtesy of The Springdale News/Shiloh Museum of the Ozarks.***

Scout Files 1999)

Most of the years 1941-1945 were overshadowed everywhere by World War II events, but by 1946 the activities of Washington County Boy Scouts had become an annual item of news. That year it was reported that there were 25 units (Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts) in the Northwest Arkansas area. In February, the annual Fathers and Sons Banquet drew several troops and their members. Some of the local units mentioned were Fayetteville Troop 100, Troop 101, Troop 102, Troop 104, and Springdale Troop 106 and Troop 107.

Units at other localities were also beginning to be recognized. West Fork Troop 95 with Maurice Ray as Scoutmaster was becoming a subject of local interest, while Prairie Grove, with Troop 94, and Lincoln, with Troop 78, were already active, and the Greenland Scout

program was gaining momentum. (*Northwest Arkansas Times*, 11 Feb 46, 10 Feb 47, and 4 Feb 49)

The 40th Birthday of the Boy Scouts of America in 1950 saw Scouting in Washington County continue to grow, and by the 50-Year Golden Anniversary in 1960 the movement had established a well-known long and proud tradition in areas of Northwest Arkansas. So many units had become active that a listing of members of the program would simply amount to a pile of registration forms and a long formal listing of units.

"Uncle Frank" Lewis became a Scout in 1918 and continued to be active for 50 years.

Many years have passed since the early days of the 1900s, and the positive impacts from Scouting continue to brighten tradition. One Washington County story can serve as example. Some years ago, a former Springdale boy who later served as pastor of a church in Dallas, Texas, was in town for a visit. While here, he made a point of going to see Judge Guy Howard who was one of the first Boy Scout leaders in Springdale. He said that he wanted Judge Howard to know that it was while he was a member of the local Boy Scouts that he decided to enter the ministry. (*Springdale News*, 30 Nov 62)

The heart of Scouting has always been boys, but the glue that holds it toqether, and makes it go, is the volunteering adult. Without a dedicated cadre of leaders, the active units fade out. While unlikely the efforts of Scouters will ever be fully recognized, a partial list can be started. The names of a few outstanding ones already

include: Frank B. Lewis, Bunn Bell, C.C. Yarrington, H.C. Dierich, Joe M. Steele, S.E. Smithson, D.D. Deaver, Herbert A. Lewis, Robert W. Bitter, W.C. Morton Jr, James L. Treffinger, James Spotts, Dr. Paul Noland, Roger Widder, W.S. "Buck" Watson, Dr. Glen Hardy, Jim Hill, E. Walter LeFevre, John B. Taylor, and on to many others. (Westark Area Council, *Diamond Anniverary Souvenir Book*, 1995)

One name that those in our history of Scouting will always recognize is that of "Uncle Frank" Lewis, the first name on the listing above. He was registered in 1918, and then continued active over the next 50 years. Many men who grew up in Northwest Arkansas still remember him at the summer camp, at his arrow making and archery skills. Even for the great number of years he was active, no doubt the greatest talent that Frank Lewis had was that he never lost his gift of seeing into, and guiding, the mind of a 12 year old. Wherever he was, it was fun.

(We wish to especially thank Jack Smitherman and Bradley R. Hancock for material used in this article.) ❖

QUERY

Jan Mhoon, 2870 West Devonshire Ave., Hemet, CA 92545. I need help in locating the origins of my 3rd great grandfather, STARK MHOON. I do know that this family was one of the earliest ones in your region. According to articles which I have found, Stark Mhoon was born in North Carolina, married MATHENIA MULLEN, and lived in Tennessee before moving to Arkansas. Perhaps there are still descendents of Stark and Mathenia in Washington County, or maybe someone will be able to supply me with the names of Stark Mhoon's parents, or place of birth. Stark Mhoon was born c 1809-11 and died in Newton County, Missouri in 1888. ❖

My Grandmother

Louiza Alzania Elizabeth Martha Jane Rambo (Henry) (Keen)

by Bob Keen

See also the article written by the author, "My Grandpa, Sid Keen" in the Nov. 1998 issue of *Flashback*, Vol. 48, No. 4, pp 20-34.

Grandma's genealogy starts with Peter Gunnison Rambo, who came to the United States in 1639 from Sweden. For awhile after this we have a blank space as far as Rambo descendants go.

Swayne Rambo - born Orangeburg S.C., 1790, died after 1850, Jackson Co., Arkansas.

Swayne Rambo Jr. - born 1823, McNairy Co Tenn., married Winnie Avery, in McNairy Co., Tenn., moved to Jackson Co., Ark., 1849, then to Searcy Co. 1851. We do not know what happened to Swayne Jr.; the 1860 Searcy Co. census shows Winnie as head of household, however there was a daughter born in 1863. Winnie and her daughter lived alone for some years. Winnie then married a William Dabbs Griffin Sep. 9, 1888, (Searcy Co. Marriage Book C, pg. 272). Winnie died May 9, 1894, and is buried in Rambo Cemetery.

Children of Swayne Rambo Jr. and Winnie Avery Rambo are:

1. Sarah Rambo - born 1846, McNairy Co. Tenn., married William Kelly.

2. Ambrose David Rambo - born March 1848, Jackson Co., Ark.; married Susan Dawson; he died July 14, 1914, Ft. Lavaca, Calhoun Co., Texas.

3. Margaret Louiza Rambo - born 1849, Jackson Co., Ark., married Charles M. O'Neal, April 18, 1886; they were married by Joel Wesley Rambo; Margaret died sometime after 1900 and is buried in the Rambo Cemetery.

4. Martha Caroline Rambo - born April 25, 1852, Searcy Co., Ark.; died July 24, 1896, Bell Co., Texas; married William Riley Parker.

5. Thomas Jefferson Rambo - born 1855, Searcy Co., Ark.; first married Rebecca Sanders, second to Margaret W. Peirce; he died in Bell Co., Texas.

6. George Washington Rambo - born 1857, Searcy Co., Ark.; died 1936, Sequoyah Co., Okla.; first wife was Rebecca C. Roberts, daughter of Wesley Roberts and Rebecca Lemons. Rebecca died in childbirth March 24, 1881 and is buried in Witts Springs, Searcy Co. George Washington is listed in the 1880 census in Van Buren Co. as Rambolt. His second wife was Elizabeth Hesson; they were married April 26, 1883, Searcy Co., Ark. (Marriage Book B, p. 185) where Garfield Rambo was born in 1894. They then moved to the Choctaw Nation. After this there is no record of Elizabeth Hesson Rambo.

George Washington and Rebecca C. Roberts Rambo's children were:

1. William W. Rambo - born 1878, died 1883, buried Witts Springs, Searcy Co., Ark.

2. Louiza Aizania Elizabeth Martha Jane Rambo - born July 24, 1881.

George Washington and Elizabeth Hesson Rambo's children were:

1. Laura Rambo - born 1885, Searcy Co., Ark.

2. Garfield Rambo - born 1894, Searcy Co.

The 1900 census of the Choctaw Nation lists:

Rambo, George Washington - head of household, age 43, born Ark.

Rambo, Joana, - wife, age 22, born in Ark.

Rambo, Laura - daughter, age 15, born in Ark.

Rambo, Garfield - son, age 6, born in Ark.

Rainbo, Winnie - stepdaughter, age 7 months, born in Indian Territory. (Maybe Joana's daughter by previous marriage.)

1910 Seqouyah County, Okla., census, household 112 lists:

Head of household - George Washington Rambo, age 53, born in Ark.

Son - Garfield Rambo, age 17, born in Ark.

Daughter - Winnie Oma Rambo, age 11, born Indian Territory.

1920 census lists, George Washington Rambo as a boarder in the household of Claude Toon, in Osage Co., Okla., 63 years of age.

This completes the genealogy of the Rambos up until my grandma, who was the daughter of George Washington Rambo. Her name was Louiza Alzania Elizabeth Martha Jane Rambo.

My dad and Uncle Robert, tell me stories of Grandma's growing-up years; one of these is her memories of going to Fort Smith, Ark., from the Indian Territory to get Indian rations. Twenty or more families would get together and arrive at the Arkansas River late in the evening, where they would stay the night. She told of how the children would play around the campfires and the older folks would visit and everyone would sleep on pallets under the wagons. The next morning they would rise early and go to Fort Smith and get their rations and return home. There is no proof that Grandma's family was part Indian, but because the family was dark complected and lived among the Indians, probably no questions were asked. I know they lived among the Indians because for the all of her life Grandma practiced Indian customs.

Grandma married Marion Anderson Henry, Nov. 3,1896, in Choctaw Nation. She was sixteen and he was twenty-two. Both of them were living in Blaine, Okla., at the time. They set up housekeeping in Star, Okla., and in 1898 they had a daughter, Maudie Melvernia Sara Katherine Henry. She died as an infant and is buried in

the Star Cemetery. In 1900 another daughter was born, Georgia Rosseni Henry. About this time Marion decided they would move to northwest Arkansas and try their luck at farming. They moved to a farm known as the old Hatchett place which was on the west side of Hale Mountain. They only lasted about six months and decided to move back to Star, Okla. They had started back when they had an accident with the wagon. Marion was injured badly and only lived about three months. He was buried in the Star Cemetery next to his little daughter. He didn't live long enough to see his son Marshall Alexander Columbus Henry born, in 1902, at Star, Okla.

Grandma moved back to Washington County, Ark., with her two small children. They lived with her brother-in-law, Marshall McCraticand, his family. Marion Henry and Marshall were half brothers. While at a church service at Antioch church, Louiza met my grandfather, Sidney Travis Keen, who was an eligible bachelor. They began their courting and were married on Jan. 27, 1904, by Ira McCaleb. All the people in the community came out to the wedding, happy to see that their friend Sid, who was blind and had lived alone for twenty years of his forty-four years, had found himself a wife. After the wedding service, all the people carried baskets of food and made their way down the trail to Sid's homestead where the party began. There was much joy on the part of the newlyweds, he wasn't alone anymore and she had someone to help raise her children. Two special guests attended the celebration, Wesley Roberts came from Searcy Co., Ark. He was Grandma's grandfather. George Washington Rambo, her father, came from Seqouyah Co., Okla.

Also attending this ceremony was her father's friend and brother-in-law Perry Hesson. Perry and George became such good friends you rarely saw one without the other. Perry's sister was George's wife who was four-

teen years older than her husband. There was only two years between Perry and George's ages which probably explains why it was so easy for them to be friends. The story goes that Perry went to live with George in a house at the foot of Dardanelle Bridge. When they heard a flood was coming, everyone decided to leave and go to higher ground. But Perry refused to leave, saying if it washed away he would hold onto the chimney. When the water went down and George returned there was no house, no chimney, and no Perry. He was never seen again. This was supposed to have happened about 1927.

Grandma's younger brother Garfield was supposed to have gone to prison. The story was that they were share-cropping for others up and down the Arkansas River. About harvest time the old man who owned the land came with a gun and tried to run them off. He shot over their heads. Garfield made a dash for the house and got the old Civil War pistol, that his Grandfather Wesley Roberts had given him, and shot and killed the old man. Garfield was underage and only spent about a year in prison.

One of the first things that Grandma and Grandpa did after they got married was to change the name of his stepson because he didn't like it. He went from Marshall Alexander Columbus, to Richard Alexander.

Grandma was very hardworking and thrifty. My Uncle Rob stated many times that she was very even tempered, but on rare occasions she could fly off the handle, and you sure knew when she did. Grandma was just four foot ten inches tall, weighed one hundred and fifteen pounds, and wore a size three shoe. She always had to buy children's shoes, but she preferred her handmade moccasins. She was a very religious person with a lot of patience. She wove white oak baskets and sold them to the neighbors for three cents apiece. It was said that you could not tell where she started or left off weaving. She

did a lot of canning with jars the old folks used to call airtights. She knew a lot of Indian ways and medicines, using a lot of herbs and roots, and different plants, but she would never tell anyone how she made her medicines. My father, her oldest son, used to watch her and he learn a lot of it. Her secrets were not kept out of selfishness, but fear that someone else would do it wrong, and come to harm. One of her specialties was female ailments. Women didn't like to go to doctors too much in those days. After she and Grandpa married, the garden that he weeded by feel became ten times larger. She grew a lot of things that he had not taken the time to grow. She even planted several rows of cotton, which she used in making pillows and mattresses and linings for quilts. Uncle Rob says some of it was even used for toilet paper. Grandpa always had to take care of the tobacco crop as he was the only one who knew how, and Grandma was opposed to it anyhow. He knew how to hang it then push it together and open it to air as was needed. He only used it for pipe tobacco.

In 1904 Grandma gave Sid his first son. His name was William Arbison Keen, born on December third. He was named after Grandma's little brother William, who had died young, and Arbison Pitts a friend of Sid's who was killed in a coal mining accident in Missouri. February brought tragedy; little Georgia Henry fell into the fireplace and was severely burned. They expected her to be okay, so Sid went to work the next morning. Sid and Roll Pennel were cutting logs on the Pennel place when one of the neighbors came and got Sid. Georgia had died. Uncle Sam George Holcroft made a little coffin; she was the first one of the family to buried in Antioch Cemetery. She was five years old; the year was 1905.

Grandma and Grandpa went on to have four more children: John Thomas, 1906; Charles Franklin, 1909; Martha Jane, 1911; Roberts Wesley, 1913. Roberts Wesley

was named after Grandma's grandfather Wesley Roberts.

Seems like Grandma was always making quilts or clothes for the children. Sid and Troy Scrapper made a trip to Van Buren to pick up a bell for the school, which had been ordered from Sears Roebuck. While there he bought Grandma a Newhome sewing machine. It came with a whole bolt of denim cloth. Grandma and Lily Green Holcroft got together and made overalls for all of the children. They even put Aunt Lily's three daughters in overalls.

Several years ago a neighbor of the family told me how Grandma was light on her feet. Grandma could go to a persons home and the dogs would never bark at her. She would never knock on a door, as she did not want to disturb anyone. She would stand in the yard until someone took notice of her and invited her in. The neighbor also remembered three of her kinfolk coming to see her, dressed like the Indians he had seen at Stillwell, Okla. He said as a child, it scared him. He thought they were being attacked, but it was only George Washington and Garfield Rambo and Perry Hesson. It seems like they were regular visitors to the Keen homestead. Grandpa's brother Abby came to visit a lot, too, and would help with the work, but Grandma didn't have much use for him. Abby was slow minded and would do things to irritate Grandma. He would spit tobacco juice off the porch all over her flowers and he never liked to be in a dark room so he would remove the curtains.

Grandma and the neighbor ladies used to all work together canning vegetables and drying fruit. Grandpa and the boys would cut cross ties and stave bolts. My dad became an expert at cutting railroad ties and shakes.

Once while Grandma was up at Aunt Louise Collins along with Grandma Slagle and Dolly Holcroft making a quilt, Granny Slagle was smoking a pipe. While quilting one of the ladies told a funny story making the rest of

the ladies burst out in laughter. All of a sudden they realized the room was filling up with smoke. Granny Slagle's pipe had turned over and had set the quilt on fire. After this when Granny Slagle came to quilting she never brought her pipe.

Grandpa decided to take the family on a long trip. He went out and borrowed a Springfield wagon from Uncle Jack Cox. They loaded up quilts and food, and set out to go see Uncle John Britton and Aunt Matt; the year was 1917. They made the long journey to Uncle John's house which was roughly twenty-two miles south of Stillwell, Okla. They stayed two days. Uncle Rob remembered this trip for it was the first time he saw a car, train, and high line wires.

On the way home they stopped near a house to fix their dinner. Dad was making a campfire when a man came down the road and said, "Sid, why do you insult me this way? My house is just up the road; you could have eaten with us." Uncle Rob tells of going into the house. It had a long table filled with food and there were Indians sitting around the room with plates. The man who came and got them was Judge Ben Payton who was judge in the Cherokee Nation.

In 1923, Grandpa decided to sell the homestead of 160 acres to a Mr. Walker for $2,300. They lived at several places after this. While living at the community of Vineyard, Grandma became active in the church. She taught Sunday School, and Uncle Rob and Martha attended school there. It was at Vineyard that Grandma wore out her old sewing machine, so Grandpa bought her a used Wellsworth, which she had until she died.

Grandma said one of the worst days of her life was when they lived on Blue Mountain, south of Prairie Grove. She and Grandpa walked into town to have a skin cancer burned off his nose. While in town, a thunder storm came up and lightening struck the house and

it burnt to the ground. She lost all of her mementos including the only picture she had of her grandparents, her mother, father, little brother William Rambo, and her sister Latina. She also lost the family Bible that had belonged to Swayne Rambo. Grandpa lost all the pictures of his family and his family Bible, that had belonged to Abner Mitchell and Nancy Travis Keen. The only thing that was salvaged was her sewing machine that was in a shed because it was cooler for her to work there. The sewing machine was blackened by the smoke but still worked.

In 1939 when all the children were grown and on their own, Sid and Louiza moved in with Louiza's son Richard Henry at Morrow, Ark. Sid did not stay there long and he moved back to Blue Mountain and lived with his daughter Martha's family. While walking his young grandson to school he fell in the creek and as a result caught pneumonia and died Nov. 24, 1941. He is buried in Antioch Cemetery. Louiza continued to live with Richard Henry. She died in Little Rock, March 24, 1950, and is buried beside Grandpa Sid in Antioch Cemetery.

My name is Robert Louis Keen Sr., my father was William Arbison Keen, the oldest son of Sid and Louiza. I have been able to go back quiet a ways on the Keen side of the family, but haven't been as successful with the Rambos. I would like any information in general about the Rambo family, but I am especially interested in Garfield and La-una Rambo. They were Louiza's brother and sister. Special thanks to my Uncle Rob Keen, James Johnston, Betty Beard, and Bill Rambo. Please write to me at this address: Robert Louis Keen Sr., 13643 Lincoln Canehill Rd., Lincoln, AR 72744; phone (501)824-5449; e-mail <bpkeen@netzero. net>. ❖

"Granny Fraley's" Notorious Nephew

Events in the life of Nathaniel Reed, alias, "Texas Jack"

by Dwain Skelton

(Author's Note: What follows is paraphrased from Nathaniel Reed's autobiography, *The Life Of Texas Jack - Eight Years a Criminal – 41 Years Trusting in God,* and is repeated here in third person. Additional details from several years of research are interposed for background and clarity. For more background and connection to Washington County, see "The Legend of 'Granny Fraley'" published in Vol. 46, No. 1 of *Flashback*, February 1996.)

Nathaniel Reed was born 23 March 1862 in Madison County, Ark. near the community of St. Paul. He was the second of two sons born to Mason H. Reed and his wife, Sarah Prater, daughter of Elijah and Jemima (Patrick) Prater. Mason and Sarah were married 16 Oct 1856. A pedigree chart for Nathaniel Reed is on page 43.

Nathaniel Reed, alias "Texas Jack," from his booklet cover.

The first, and perhaps most influential, event in young Nate's life was the death of his father on 6 Jun 1864. Mason H. Reed was a casualty of the Civil War. He served as a private in "A" Co., 13th Kansas Infantry (Union Army). He is buried in the Fort Smith National Cemetery at Fort Smith, Ark. His grave is #2451 in section five of the cemetery.

In 1865 Nathaniel's mother remarried one William Cochran. By June 1870, Nathaniel had half siblings; John, four years younger than he, and twins, Andrew J. and Martha A., eight years younger than he. The family

lived in North Fork Township, Barton Co., Missouri.

Nate's step-father was kind to him until his mother died on 14 Oct 1875. Within three or four months after her death William Cochran remarried one Mary Wagner, a Dutch widow, with thirteen children. Having just turned a teenager, Nathaniel felt his step-father was now being cruel to him and his world had been turned upside down. He went to stay with his uncle, Samuel Prater, who also lived in Missouri.

His aunt was kind but she was not his mother; he cried a lot. Samuel sent him to his Grandpa Elijah Prater's home in Hilburn Township, Madison Co., Ark. His Grandma Jemima was kind to him and he stayed with them four years.

Nate's mother was buried nearby in the Brashears Cemetery and Nate said he would go sit on her tombstone and cry. He described himself as being timid and chicken-hearted at that age. He was still with his grandparents when the 1880 U.S. Census was taken.

Soon afterwards, however, Nathaniel left his grandparents home and went back to Missouri to be with his brother. While there, he worked on a farm and heard lots of tales about the buffaloes, wonderful adventures, and great opportunities out there in the far west. He was not yet twenty years old when he thought it best to leave Missouri.

(Author's Note: Nathaniel Reed's only full-blood brother was William Elijah who lived in Barton Co., Mo. Possibly it was he who Nate went to be with.)

In the spring of 1883 Nate found himself around Pueblo, Colorado, without the comforts of home, no sweetheart, and just roughing it out on the prairie. He was working on a horse ranch drawing forty dollars a month. He wrote his brother about coming back to Missouri but was persuaded otherwise. There was some question about his property back in Missouri and it

needed to be settled before he came back.

Not being happy in Pueblo, Reed quit his job and caught a train to Colorado Springs and from there through Denver to Cheyenne, Wyoming. At Cheyenne, Nate got a job driving a ten-mule-team military freight wagon belonging to the Government Cavalry from Castle Rock, Utah. They drove three hundred miles to deliver the supplies to Fort Arnold. The Indians were troublesome and the soldiers had several skirmishes with them. It took six weeks to make the round trip and get back to Cheyenne. One of those trips was enough so he drew his pay.

(Author's Note: On 28 June 1883, Nathaniel Reed loaned $400.00 to Henry B. Williams and his wife, Casandra. It was to be paid back on 1 October 1883. The interest rate was ten percent.)

Nathaniel took the train to Rock Springs, Idaho, and found work in a coal mine. He was in a camp with 340 white people and 800 Chinamen. He made $3.65 per day and had only worked thirteen days when a Chinaman called him a vile name. Nate hit him on the head with a lump of coal. Those folks really got upset! His white employers hid-him-out until dark, provided him with a disguise and put him on the train for Denver. Trouble was about to overtake him.

Reed spent three months in Trinidad, Colo. Then he worked on a nearby cattle ranch until the Spring of 1884. One of the Mexican cowhands taught him to speak some Spanish and took him to Mexico to work for him on his horse ranch. It turned out they were supposed to steal the horses. Nate said "no," saddled his horse and headed back north. He crossed into Texas and found work helping drive a herd of cattle up into Oklahoma to a cattle ranch near Cottonwood Creek some eighteen miles from what is today Oklahoma City.

(Author's Note: Remember the couple who borrowed the

$400.00? They forgot to repay it. Reed sued the Williams in Sumner County, Kansas, District Court on 9 Jul 1884.)

He went from there to Caldwell, Sumner County, Kansas just before Christmas and stayed until Spring of 1885.

(Author's Note: On 1 Mar 1885 Nate was enumerated in the Falls Township, Sumner County, Kansas, census as a 22-year-old, single, white male, laborer, born in Arkansas, and most recently living in Missouri.)

On 19 May 1885 he was awarded judgment against the Williams. On 14 July 1885 the Sumner County Sheriff was ordered to collect the judgment ($475.30) for him.

Nathaniel's next job was at the Flying "V" Ranch near El Reno, Okla. It was owned by a man named Tarry (Terry) and the boss at the ranch was named Coffey. The horses were poor and too slow and couldn't be ridden hard. In May they all set out to round up some cattle. They camped on the Cimmaron River to let the grass get a little bigger and the horses put on some flesh. Coffey and two of the ranch hands, Tom Colley and Bill Bell, spent time by themselves and did a lot of talking.

A crew of thirteen of the Flying "V" ranch hands was picked to leave camp and go on a round-up. They took two days rations. After the food ran out they were still riding away from the camp and no cattle were being rounded up. Nate started to wonder what was going on.

On the evening of the fourth day the crew was all lined up, at gunpoint, given ammunition, and assigned their duties in a planned robbery of the Santa Fe Express. Reed's job was to stand on the rear platform of the last coach, kick on the door, shoot, and yell. To make a long story short, only the safe was robbed. None of the passengers was forced to give up their valuables.

When the crew got back to camp Nathaniel Reed was given $6,480.00 as his share of the robbery. The thought of how large a crime he had been involved with made

him shake like he had a chill. He quit his job in the fall and tried to have a good time that winter (1885-86). His guilty conscience would not give him any peace.

Reed decided to find a small out-of-the-way place to settle down. He selected Corbin, Sumner County, Kansas and put $6,000 in the bank at nearby Caldwell, Kansas.

Corbin, Kansas, was good for Nate. He went into the livery business, made new friends, and things were going good for him.

(Author's Note: On 28 Apr 1886 he married Ella Mason at Wellington, the county seat of Sumner County, Kansas. L. A. Simmons, a Justice of the Peace, conducted the ceremony.)

Three months later, a man rode into the livery stable at Corbin. He said he was on his way to Wichita, Kans., to see if he could help Tom Colley. Tom had been arrested in connection with the Santa Fe Express robbery at La Junta, Colo., and was going to turn states evidence if he couldn't get out on bond.

Shortly afterwards, Reed received a letter that Colley didn't make bond. Trouble was about to overtake him again. It was time to leave town! He left his young wife weeping as he rode away.

Being away from Ella was more than Nate could handle. Three months later he returned to Corbin, gathered her up and they relocated to another state (probably the fall of 1886).

(Author's Note: This move "to another state" is the last time there is any record of Reed's wife, Ella. Legend has it, they had a child. What became of them?)

In 1888 a messenger located Nathaniel Reed and gave him a limited time to join a gang of outlaws. They were short of men because some of them had been killed. Reed had the choice of either joining them or possibly facing prison. Trouble was about to overtake him again. He reluctantly joined them hoping to be able to get

away soon.

While "on the scout," in the Choctaw Nation, he got into a scuffle and wound up shot.

(Author's Note: Older folks, who can remember seeing Nathaniel when he was a young man, say he wore his hair in long pigtails, hanging down both sides, possibly to disguise himself as an Indian. His saddle horses were of the very best stock, superior to those typically found in Northwest Arkansas. He usually rode one and led a second.)

In the Fall of 1888 the band got "some" money from a bank in the small town of Riverside, Texas. It lasted until the Spring of 1889. On 8 May 1889, Butler, Scott, Ike Rogers, Bob Powers, and Nate got the express money from the stage at Canyon Gap, Colorado, and headed for California. Near Phoenix, Arizona, they got a "nice roll" from a train that paid them all well.

Reed then went to Bloomfield, Indiana, where innocent questions about his past caused him to start losing sleep. So, he pulled up stakes again and went to Tennessee for the Winter (1889).

In the Spring of 1890 he was in Dallas, Texas. In June, Butler, Rogers, and Nate went to Michigan and stayed out of sight and out of trouble for about a year.

In April 1891, six of the band (gang) went to rob a bank on the border of Texas. The president of the gang arranged with the cashier to divide the money into equal packages and to keep a share for himself.

They robbed the bank of Brownsville, Texas, on 19 June 1891 and got $36,000.00. The bank reported it lost $86,000.00. Nate later heard the "well-to-do" cashier moved to Boston.

After the Brownsville robbery Nathaniel Reed received the outlaw name, "Texas Jack."

(Author's Note: There was an earlier "Texas Jack" who performed with "Buffalo Bill" Cody and "Wild Bill" Hickock in their Wild West Shows. His real name was J.R. Omohondro.

He lived one generation earlier than Nathaniel Reed.)

After their success at Brownsville, the gang decided they could safely ride in the daylight. But, on 28 June a posse of seventeen Texas Rangers charged them. They dismounted and fought. It lasted five hours. Texas Jack got two slight flesh wounds in his left leg. One of the gang was killed and they lost some horses.

ESCAPE FROM RANGERS — drawing by Texas Jack for his booklet

Darkness covered their escape but the Rangers caught up the next night. They used a hound dog to track them. The hound and five of the Ranger's horses were casualties of the next confrontation before the gang was able to give the Rangers the slip. A second man died leaving Texas Jack and his companions with four men and only three horses and one of them was wounded.

The Rangers caught up with them again and hoisted a flag of council. Texas Jack talked for the gang. Somehow he talked the captain of the Rangers into "standing down" his men while they negotiated. When the rest of

the Rangers finally decided to advance and see what was taking so long, they found their captain and one other of the Rangers tied up and their horses missing.

When the sun came up the next morning, the gang was across the Red River into Indian Territory at a friend named George Shaw's place on Walnut Creek where they had some horses in pasture. They rested there for about five days and then went up into the Shawnee Nation.

In August 1891 Texas Jack and Ike Rogers decided to go to Kansas to meet Doolin and the Daltons. They met up with a "large army" of Oklahoma Tenderfeet carrying a copy of the *Dallas Daily News* showing headlines about the Dalton and Texas Jack gang's most recent activities. Reed passed himself off as a U.S. Marshall out of Purcell, Indian Territory, after Texas Jack and said Rogers was from Kansas looking for the Daltons and Bill Doolin. The Tenderfeet believed it. Reed and Rogers rode on toward Kansas, unmolested.

Seven of the "boys" started for Waco, Texas, and stayed south the winter of 1891.

(Author's Note: Reed's recollection as to what year he and Rogers went to Kansas to find Doolin and the Daltons may have been off by one year. Some records indicate it may have been 1892 rather than 1891.)

Sherman Teal, a barber in Wellington, Kansas relates the story, "When I Shaved the Dalton Outlaws:" About October 1892 five or six men rode into Wellington after dark. He thought they were probably a wheat threshing crew just visiting the pool hall and malt shop. The owner of the establishment seemed to know the men. After the "threshers" had helped themselves to a few drinks they decided each needed a shave.

The barber chair was located in the front of the same building with the pool hall and malt shop. While he shaved man #1, the others guarded all the doors to the

building. After shaving the next to last man the barber became "barber-like" and started talking about the notice in the morning paper about the Dalton Boys being shot to death in New Mexico. As he was cleaning up his customer's face the man became angry and looked him straight in the eyes. Then he put his left hand edgewise across his face just under his eyes and remarked "My XXX! from my hand up is Bob Dalton, and when they get the Dalton Boys, I want you to write me and tell me all about it, See!"

The proprietor winked at the barber and shook his head. At that point he realized he wasn't just shaving a bunch of wheat harvesters but instead was dealing with the most dreaded bunch of outlaws in the United States and the one still in his chair was their leader, Bob Dalton.

The next, and last of the gang, to take the chair, was Texas Jack. He was very homely and hard to shave. The barber was so nervous by that time he struck Jack on the chin a couple times while trying to put towels around his neck. He could hardly keep the brush in the mug and while lathering his face he put lather in his mouth, nose, ears, and eyes. Bob Dalton, noticing the situation, looked the other way and smiled.

The barber shook so badly he was having difficulty stroking the razor across Texas Jack's face. The sympathetic outlaw, noticing the barber's predicament gruffly remarked, "Go ahead, kid, I'm not afraid. You can do anything you like, if you only think so." Those remarks seemed to settle the barber down and he gave Jack a very fair shave.

What shook the barber up so much was, after the landlord gave him the "hunch," he noticed all those men carried large revolvers partly hidden under their overalls and jumpers. He learned from the proprietor the men were Bob Dalton, Grat Dalton, Bill Bradwell,

and Texas Jack.

About three weeks after that incident in Wellington, several of the Dalton Gang met their demise in an attempt to rob two banks at once in Coffeyville, Kansas. The six men in the Dalton Gang at Coffeyville were: Bob, Grat, and Emmett Dalton, Bill Doolin, "Dick" Broadwell, and Bill Powers. Was Dick Broadwell the Bill Bradwell Sherman Teal had indicated was in the barbershop in Wellington, Kansas, three weeks earlier? And, was Bill Powers the Bob Powers Nathaniel Reed had indicated was riding with his group on 8 May 1889?

Richard L. Broadwell, also known as "Texas Jack," joined the Dalton Gang and was killed in the Coffeyville, Kansas, bank robbery attempts.

Nathaniel Reed was known in Sumner County, Kansas. He had been in business in Corbin, had money in the bank in Caldwell, had been involved in lawsuits and had married in Wellington. The proprietor of the malt shop/pool hall/barber shop could possibly have recognized him and, if so, would have identified him as Nathaniel Reed, not as "Texas Jack."

In January 1892 "The Gang" conducted a stage coach robbery near San Antonio, Texas, but only netted $800 for six of them to split up. The band was then controlled by an old head, Dan Cummings, from Buffalo, New York. They later robbed his uncle of 35 pounds of gold nuggets.

The gold was divided up and packed on Mexican donkeys and they headed out across country toward Pikes Peak. Once there, they chartered a railroad car for Salt Lake and spent the winter (1892-93) there.

(Author's Note: Nathaniel Reed's full-blood brother, William Elijah Reed, died in 1891 and lies buried in Waters Cemetery, Barton County, Missouri.)

When spring (1893) arrived, Texas Jack went back to Indian Territory. He had decided to quit living the life

of an outlaw. The president of the gang (Jim Dyer) wouldn't let him retire and insisted he join Henry Starr, Frank Chaney, and Kid Wilson who were planning to rob the bank in Bentonville, Ark. He refused to be a part of that robbery and instead indicated he would buy a farm in Arkansas. Dyer told him he couldn't do that. In June 1893 the Bentonville bank was robbed.

Texas Jack and Jim Dyer's sister, Sally, a three-time widow, made plans to marry in the winter of 1894 and talked about going to Old Mexico.

In May 1894 Texas Jack had an argument and fight with Dyer. It was a hard summer. It took a lot of money to live as an outlaw. They didn't get enough sleep, rest, or food. They had seven fights with the marshalls and Jack got wounded four times. One of the fights, 12 Jul 1894, was at the J. O. Ranch in the Choctaw Nation. Jack was shot under the jaw and lost his horse. Jim Dyer left him alone. Jack decided Dyer's plan was to have him captured and somehow collect the reward.

Texas Jack's wounds kept him grounded for days. At night he would crawl down to a stream and put mud on his jaw to ease the pain. Finally, on the fifth night, he started walking. The Widow Harris helped him. He got him another horse.

Jack made his way to the Creek Nation and hooked up with Tom Root, a Cherokee Indian. He was still mad about Jim Dyer leaving him to get captured. He sent a note telling Dyer where he was and planned to kill him when he showed up. When Dyer got there they talked it out and wound up planning another robbery.

Dyer took Texas Jack and Tom Root, to Buz Luckey's where they met Bill Smith. Smith and Luckey were Negroes. They further planned and even rehearsed the robbery of the Katy Express at Blackstone Switch. Blackstone was eight miles north of Muskogee, Okla.

On Tuesday, 13 Nov 1894, there were seven U.S.

deputy marshalls riding in the express car of the train when it arrived. Among them were James F. "Bud" Ledbetter and Paden Tolbert. Something went wrong with the gang's plan and they didn't get into the express car. Jim Dyer failed to show up. Jack wound up going through the passenger cars and robbing them instead. When he left the last car someone shot him. This time it was a serious injury.

Jack was helped on his horse and rode a short distance before he had to dismount. The others in the gang hid him up under a rock ledge and rode away. They came back later that night expecting to bury him. Nancy Chishom was with them.

Texas Jack was not dead and was well hidden so they left him there and some of them would return at night with food and water. Nancy brought him water, buttermilk, and saufaka (Indian food).

Jack became worried about being in the same place for such a long time and on Sunday night he crawled away. He found help from some of the folks living in the area. He would approach them, get food and water, and then slip back into the woods. Those deputies and other local lawmen were checking everywhere for the man they had shot. They knew he had to be hurt bad.

Later on, Jim Dyer and his brother found Jack and arranged for him to be driven to Seneca, Missouri. On 20 Dec 1894, Jack paid a man named William Lawrence and his wife to take care of him.

On 6 Mar 1895, Texas Jack left Seneca, Mo., for his brother's home in Madison County, Arkansas. From there he wrote Judge Isaac Parker (The Hanging Judge) in Fort Smith telling him he was ready to surrender. Two U.S. Deputy Marshalls, Bill Smith and Burl Cox arrived on 17 Mar 1895. The following day they loaded Texas Jack on the train bound for Fort Smith.

(Author's Note: Since William Elijah Reed had passed away in 1891, this "brother" would have been either of Nathaniel's half-brothers, John or Andrew J. Cochran.)

Isaac Parker was a 36-year-old two-term former Congressman from St. Joseph, Mo. when, in 1875, President U.S. Grant appointed him Federal Judge for the Western District of Arkansas. He was a large man, over six feet tall and weighed more than 200 pounds. He had a deep voice and white hair. He served 21 years on the bench and sentenced 160 men to death. Of those, 79 were hanged, – six at one time. 65 of Judge Parker's 200-225 deputies were killed in the line of duty.

The Old Federal Building with its basement jail at Fort Smith. Judge Parker's courtroom was on the first floor just above jail.

The Fort Smith Court was eliminated in August 1896 and the "Hanging Judge" died two months later (November 1896).

The authorities processed Jack and took him directly to the prison hospital. His condition was critical and they needed to keep him alive. They had caught Tom Root and Buz Luckey not long after the Blackstone Switch robbery. Luckey had been charged with killing one of the deputy marshalls.

Food in the prison hospital was not the best but Jack lived on it. For breakfast he got a tin cup of coffee, half a small loaf of bread, a slice of fat bacon, a small portion

of rice, and a little sorghum molasses. Twice a day he got a hunk of cornbread—two inches thick and five inches square, a small portion of beef, and one kind of vegetable placed in a quart pan. After the doctors examined his wounds and counted all the bullet holes in him they pronounced him "unkillable, by man." The last gunshot he received had gone through his bowels and bladder.

As he was physically able to do so, Jack began to describe the "secret society of outlaws" he had been involved with. He said it was a large number of people and that one man (the president) controlled the gang. The gang's president had made friends with express agents who would send him telegrams about large movements of money. They, in turn, would share in the takings. Little by little he filled them in on the detailed planning that went into each robbery.

Texas Jack's motto was "Take One's Time." The detectives got anxious for more information and offered to share some of the reward money if he would turn states evidence on the other gang members. He rejected their offer of money and told them instead, he wanted to be a free man.

On 15 May 1895, Texas Jack was taken to the private chambers of Judge Isaac Parker's Court where he gave them the name of James Dyer and negotiated total immunity from all charges if he could provide them with information that would convict Dyer. Additionally, he had to promise the "Court of the United States" he would stop all his criminal activities.

Three days later, they started writing his story down – names, places, and certain witnesses. They found things just as he had described them but it all took a lot of time. It was July when they arrested Jim Dyer and brought him to jail.

Judge Parker called the court case for the Blackstone

Switch Train Robbery on 15 Aug 1895. The jury was picked and indictments were read against James Dyer, Buz Luckey, Tom Root, and Nathaniel Reed. The jury was told that Tom Root and Nathaniel Reed had acknowledged their part in the robbery and their testimony would be used to convict the other two.

Excerpts from Reed's testimony follow: The robbery took place at eleven-o-clock at night, 13 Nov 1894. Jim Dyer only lived seven miles away, but he did not come. It took four sticks of dynamite to blow the doors off the express car. "Bud" Ledbetter and "Pat" Tolbert would not come out. Jack went to the engine and could not find the engineer. He looked for the conductor but couldn't find him either. There were four cars with passengers in them. He forced a passenger to carry the sack and search the passengers. Jack had seen a telegram from Dallas stating there would be $10,065 in the express safe to leave the 12th of November on the Katy #2. He had the time card for the train. He got shot and the blood came freely. It still flowed from his bladder.

One juryman wanted to see the blood flowing, so, Nate "showed them it right there." He was on the stand twenty minutes.

J. Warren Reed was the lawyer for Dyer and Luckey. A number of witnesses came to support Dyer. He was a very influential man. They tried to make Nate out as the gang leader.

It didn't take the jury long to return a guilty verdict for James Dyer. He was held in jail at Fort Smith until September. He was sentenced to fifteen years.

(Author's Note: According to one of Nate's letters to his cousin, James Dyer was sent to Columbus, Ohio, to serve his time.)

Buz Luckey was charged with murdering one of the deputies after the robbery but he beat the charge. But, he still got fifteen years for his part in the train robbery.

Nate was sentenced to five years. Tom Root was released but was reportedly killed in Indian Territory on 31 Aug 1896.

(Author's Note: Deputy Marshall Newton LaForce was the man Buz Luckey was supposed to have killed.)

It took time to get "certain proper forms from a higher court" and Nate spent that time in jail in Fort Smith. He was freed from jail on 10 Sep 1896. Conditions of the parole were that he report, in person, to the authorities at Fort Smith each year.

Nate was crippled and needed two crutches to support himself. It was decided that for his first year of parole he would be sent to a hospital in Las Vegas, New Mexico. He saw Doctor Rice every day and Marshall Wax came to check on him once a week. He stayed in the hospital five and one half months.

After Nate was released from the hospital in Las Vegas, his first parole report was on 18 Feb 1897 to Marshall Crump back in Fort Smith. The Marshall was happy with the report and sent "Jack" on his way with instructions to "be good" for another year.

(Author's Note: On 15 Dec 1897 Nathaniel Reed deeded one fourth of one eleventh part of the estate of Elijah Prater (deceased) to George M. Anderson. The Prater farm had been 176 acres in Sections 1 and 2, Township 13 North, Range 27 West.)

The next place Nate went was to his half-sister's (Martha A. Cochran, wife of J. H. Crane) in Fort Scott, Kansas. After a visit and rest in Fort Scott, he bought a team of ponies and a wagon and started selling "pins, needles, and other things of a notion line." Mostly, he bartered for chickens and eggs.

Reed worked at that business for four years, still on his crutches, expanding his inventory, and was reasonably successful. He was prompt with his parole reports to Fort Smith.

Texas Jack Arrested.

Fort Smith, Jan. 19.— Nath Reed, alias Texas Jack, was arrested in the Federal court house today on a warrant from Washington county charging him with horse stealing.

Reed was the leader of a gang that robbed the "Katy" train at Blackstone Switch in November, 1894 and was shot in the loins. He is the principal witness for the government against James Dyer, who is charged with instigating, planning and receiving part of the booty from that robbery.

Reed arrived today from Kansas and was arrested as soon as he appeared at the court house. He will be held here until after Dyer's trial. The charge is an old one, and many think it was brought by Dyer's friends to keep Reed from testifying against Dyer."

Nathan Reed is under indictment in this county for horse stealing. He is charged with stealing Col. Hunt's horse in the summer of '94.

From *Fayetteville Democrat* January 27, 1898.

(Author's Note: On 19 Jan 1898, Nathaniel Reed, alias "Texas Jack" was arrested on a warrant from Washington County, Ark., charging him with stealing Colonel Hunt's horse in the summer of 1894. He was required as a prosecution witness for Jim Dyer's second trial and was held in jail at Fort Smith until after the trial was concluded.)

Dyer's conviction was reversed by the U.S. Supreme Court and after his second trial was concluded, he was acquitted on 25 March 1898.

(Author's Note: We don't know exactly when Reed was tried on the horse stealing charge but he claims to have spent 23 months in jail at Fort Smith. Only eighteen months of that time were related to the Blackstone Switch Train Robbery. That would leave him being jailed another five months related to the horse stealing charge and possibly being released about June 1898.)

After he quit peddling, Nate wrote and published a pamphlet, giving, in part, details of his life, and eight years as a criminal. Originally, the pamphlet was only eight pages, 5 1/4 by 7 inches. He had a thousand printed and sold them all in five and one half weeks.

He enlarged his story and had another pamphlet of 28

pages printed at Girard, Kansas. That contract was for 10,000 copies, keeping the title of it "Texas Jack." Nate drove from town to town lecturing and selling his books at ten cents each. The lectures were concerning his corner of what was known as "Parker's Court." The public was enthused and fifteen weeks later he was out of books again.

Toward the end of November 1899, Nate traveled to Dallas, Texas, where he contracted for printing 10,000 more of the 28-page booklet. He had to lay over two weeks while the printing was finished.

In a few short weeks, lecturing at the Saturday "Trade Days" across South Central Texas, he sold the entire printing of ten thousand booklets and had to return to Dallas for another printing. Some of the towns where he lectured and sold his books were Waxahachie, Waco, Austin, and Round Rock, Texas. When the next printing was ready, Nate went to Fort Worth for five weeks, Gainsville for two weeks, and then on to Shawnee, Okla. There he took sick and spent some time in the hospital.

In March 1901 he was again able to travel and drove to Oklahoma City. He stayed there three months selling his books and making talks on street corners and other places. Nate believed that God gave him a message while he was in the prison hospital that he was to tell the truth about his past as a warning to the young people that crime does not pay.

Once again the booklets were all sold out. That time he enlarged it to 38 pages and ordered another 25,000 printed. They were finished in July 1901.

When the books arrived he contacted the Kemp Sisters about their Wild West Exhibit and joined that show. They went to New York where they had a contract with Fair Associations for nine weeks. Their first exhibit was in Franklinville, New York, on 8 Sep 1901. The banner read: "Texas Jack, Wild West Show and Train Robber."

Reed got a surprise when a man named Owensby, the New York License Commissioner, asked to see his license to lecture in that state. He responded that his line was Christian work. Still, the following weekend he was required to go to Buffalo and give his lecture and be examined before the "Deacon's Board." He did, and they authorized him to lecture in New York on "Reform Life" as long as he lived. Additionally, Owensby told him if he would stay for the night's service and continue his lecture he would be allowed to have all the collection.

The next morning the Deacon's Board gave Nate his declaration (license to lecture) and $175.00 which was the door receipts for Sunday night. On 1 Dec 1901 he got in his wagon and started driving south.

The next time Reed mentions stopping on his travels, he was in Hot Springs, Ark., taking baths for his health. Then he headed back across Missouri, selling his little books, and got to his half-sister's house in Fort Scott, Kansas in April 1902.

While he was in Fort Scott, he met a man named Brown and they decided to start up a comedy show. At first it was very successful but Nate grew suspicious about some of their dealings, dissolved the show and hit the road selling his books again.

By October 1903 he was in "Wawpaw", Ohio and suffering from a lingering "bad cold" so he decided to head for Tucumcari, New Mexico. He stayed there until June 1909 and tried his hand at farming—a tough job for a cripple.

Reed still had some of his books on hand so he pulled up stakes and started across Texas toward Oklahoma. In Tulsa, on 17 Nov 1910 he sold his wagon and team and moved into a houseboat on the Arkansas River. He cut the houseboat loose from the shore and started floating down the river.

On 11 Jan 1911 Nathaniel Reed tied his houseboat up

on the banks of the Mississippi River at Greenville, Miss. He built a ferryboat and operated it across the river at Greenville for four and one half years.

On 8 Sep 1915, Nate took sick and had to go to the hospital. Doctor W. P. Payne operated on him and kept him in the hospital for seven weeks. When he was released he was too weak to continue operating the ferry so he cut it loose and started floating on down the river. He stopped in Vicksburg until November 1918 and then moved on down to Plaquemine Point, Iberville Parish, Louisiana.

(Author's Note: Approximately 1 May 1894, a group of ten women organized the King's Daughters Hospital in Greenville, Miss. They rented a small house, with two rooms and a kitchen, near Poplar and Main Streets. Because of their vision and compassion for the sick and injured, Nate was able to find professional medical attention in Greenville.)

Reed had saved up a little bit of money and he decided to put it in the bank at Plaquemine. In June 1920, he asked the bank to "call in" all the money he had in several banks around the country. They did as he requested and within thirty days closed their doors, leaving him with no money to live on.

In 1924, Fox Studios, in Los Angeles, California sent Nathaniel Reed $250 expense money to come out there for a five-month tryout. They wanted to make a movie about his life. He was too sick to travel and had to return the money.

For the next few years he was living from "hand to mouth." He did all sorts of manual labor associated with the fishing industry, building boats, making fish nets, etc. Eventually, he had three families working with him in his endeavors.

In 1927 the Mississippi River flooded the entire area and ruined the farmers in that section of the country. The families that had been helping Nate were left home-

less and with no means of support. Reed's health was getting worse and the financial panic of 1929 only added to his misery.

In July 1930, the doctors in Plaquemine told Nate he was going to die and they had exhausted all known remedies to save him. He gave what little "stuff" he had to the families who had helped him, bought a ticket, and on 7 July departed for Kansas City, Mo.

In Kansas City, on 13 Jul 1930, he checked into the Clinic Hospital. The doctors tried all known remedies on him but never gave him a good chance of recovery. It was three and one half months later when he was released.

Reed visited around in the Kansas City area for a year and a half, went to Fort Scott, Kans., for three months, then to Springfield, Mo., for two months, then to St. Paul, Ark., for two months, and arrived in Fort Smith on 1 May 1934 where he spent five months building himself a campboat on the Poteau River.

On 15 October Nate cut his boat loose from the shore and started drifting down stream. His destination was Plaquemine, Louisiana to attempt to recover his money from that bank that went "belly up."

He spent some time with old friends as he continued down the rivers and landed at his old stomping grounds on the Grand Bayou on 9 Jan 1935.

Negotiations were immediately started with the fellows who had been in charge of the defunct bank. On 12 Jan 1936, they settled for eighty-six cents on the dollar. Reed took his money and headed back up the river for Fort Smith. He wanted to go to California and check out that movie offer again but had learned they would need some verification of his claim to be "Texas Jack."

Nate collected letters from several folks attesting to his identity, his relationship with Judge Isaac Parker, and his outlaw name "Texas Jack." One of the letters was from

U.S. Deputy Marshall J. B. "Bud" Ledbetter who shot Reed during the 13 Nov 1894 Blackstone Switch Train Robbery. Ledbetter stated he and Reed were born about 18 miles apart in Madison County, Ark., and were boyhood friends.

On 2 Feb 1936 Nate arrived in Los Angeles, Calif. One of the first things he did was go see Emmett Dalton. Emmett was in bad health but they still were able to visit about "old times."

Reed claims he had known Emmett since the "early days."

Over the next few days Nate met with several movie studio executives to discuss making a motion picture of his life. He was unable to get a contract. He left California and arrived back in Fort Smith on 26 Feb 1936.

(Author's Note: In early 1938 Reed was found living in Tulsa, Okla. His pamphlet had been expanded to 55 pages and was selling for 25 cents. He spent his time lecturing to anyone who would listen, telling them "crime did not pay.")

As the years passed, his memory appears to have "expanded" and he felt it necessary to enlarge his autobiography. Authenticating some of those expanded memories and preserving them for the future was the goal of this effort. A concerted effort was made to eliminate most of the obvious exaggerations.

Nathaniel Reed's gravestone at Brashears Cemetery, Brashears, Madison Co., Ark.

Nathaniel Reed, alias "Texas Jack" died at his home in Tulsa, Okla., on 7 Jan 1950. He was just a couple months short of his 88th birthday. On 9 January he was laid to rest in the Brashears Cemetery, halfway between Combs and St. Paul, Ark., not far from where he was born.

Pedigree Chart

Chart no

No. 1 on this chart is the same as no. ____ on chart no. ____

1 **NATHANIEL REED**
B: 23 MAR 1862
P: Arkansas
M: 28 APR 1886
P: Wellington, Sumner County, Kansas
D: 7 JAN 1950
P: Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma

2 **MASON H. REED**
B: 1841
P: ARKANSAS
M:
P:
D: 6 JUN 1864
P: probably Fayetteville, Arkansas

3 **SARAH PRATER**
B: 1839
P: FLOYD COUNTY, KENTUCKY
D: 14 OCT 1875
P: Probably Barton County, Missouri

4 **JAMES REED**
B: 1802
P: VIRGINIA
M: 28 MAR 1822
P: FLOYD COUNTY, KENTUCKY
D: 1855
P: ARKANSAS

5 **ALCY FERGUSON**
B: 1800
P:
D: After 1860 and before 1870
P: ARKANSAS

6 **ELIJAH PRATER**
B:
P:
M: 15 SEP 1832
P: FLOYD COUNTY, KENTUCKY
D:
P:

7 **JEMIMA PATRICK**
B: abt 1817
P:
D: bet 1880 and 1900
P: MADISON COUNTY, ARKANSAS

8 **BENJAMIN REED**
B: 1768
P: NORTH CAROLINA
M: 17 DEC 1792
P: Warren County, North Carolina
D: abt 1837
P: ARKANSAS

9 **CHARITY VAUGHN**
B:
P:
D:
P:

10 **WILLIAM FERGUSON**
B: 11 AUG 1755
P: COUNTY DOWN, IRELAND
M:
P: South Carolina
D: 10 AUG 1839
P: MAGOFFIN COUNTY, KENTUCKY

11 **CATHERINE LEMASTER**
B: 20 NOV 1754
P: MARYLAND
D: 1839
P: MAGOFFIN COUNTY, KENTUCKY

12
B:
P:
M:
P:
D:
P:

13
B:
P:
D:
P:

14 **ROBERT PATRICK**
B:
P:
M:
P:
D:
P:

15
B:
P:
D:
P:

16 **WILLIAM REED**
B: 23 JAN 1736/37
D: Prior to 15 April 1822

17 **ELIZABETH**
B:
D:

18
B:
D:

19
B:
D:

20 **JOSIAH FERGUSON**
B: abt 1725
D: APR 1803

21 **MRS. JOSIAH FERGUS(**
B: abt 1729
D:

22 **ABRAHAM LEMASTER**
B: 1713
D: 1778

23 **ANN**
B:
D:

24
B:
D:

25
B:
D:

26
B:
D:

27
B:
D:

28
B:
D:

29
B:
D:

30
B:
D:

31
B:
D:

Prepared 6 JUL 1999 by:
Dwain H. Shelton

THE LEGEND OF TEXAS JACK
by Georgia Ann Yates

Many a boy has grown up good
Just to get off on the wrong track
One young man, I'll tell you about
was known as Texas Jack

When he left his home in Arkansas
Nathaniel Reed was his name
He never knew that the rest of his life
He'd be running from his fame.

He went to work on a ranch out West
With some men of low estate
They taught him how to shoot a gun
The rest we'll call just fate

They robbed their way across the land
Then held up on the ranch
He knew by then, if he tried to get out
He never stand a chance.

To save his life he turned himself in
Texas Jack, as he was known
Came face to face with the hanging judge
The man whose heart was pure stone

His sentence he served in a cold, dark cell
And while sitting there alone
He saw himself for what he had been
A good boy who had gone wrong

So he spent his life from that time on
A tryin' to go straight
And telling others, "Change your ways"
Before it is too late.

The researchers of this article gratefully acknowledge

and deeply appreciate all those who provided background information and interesting leads to be followed. A special thanks goes to: Mrs. Dora Mae Heckman of Tahlequah, Okla., who shared so many memories and historical items; Mrs. Georgia Ann Yates of Fayetteville, Ark., who gave us permission to include "The Legend of Texas Jack" in this article; and of course, to Nathaniel Reed of Brashears, Ark., who had the vision and forethought to preserve those interesting events of his life for our enjoyment. ❖

QUERIES

Mary Fern Souder, 601 Oakridge Drive, Bartlesville, OK 74006, phone (918) 333-5553, e-mail <MaryFernS@aol.com>. Would like to correspond with persons researching the following surnames in Washington County before 1880: PENDERGRAFT/PENDERGRASS, ROSE, STRAIN, CARTER, WETSEL/WHETSEL, FORD, STROUD, MASHBURN, HALL, HOLT, PATTON, CRAWL (CROWELL), FOWLER, SWAFFORD, KENDRICK, FINE, and SPURLOCK.

Betty C. Laarveld, P. O. Box 56, El Dorado, CA 95623-0056, phone 530-622-9434, e-mail <betz19@juno.com>. Am looking for the parents of MARY ELLEN YORK, born 25 Jul 1884, West Fork, Washington Co., Ark. It is believed ARGUSTUS "GUS" was born about 1857, and died about 1915. REBECCA ARIZONA BROWN (I found her on the 1865 Sheriff's Census for 1865, listed as Becy A. female age 0-16 in West Fork Township.) I can find no other mention of her. Would like to hear from anyone who might be able to help. I am also looking for Mount Comfort either in Washington or Madison County, Ark. ❖

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